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31 March 1981  
OPPPM 81-1685

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Harry E. Fitzwater  
Director of Personnel  
Policy, Planning, and Management

SUBJECT: Classification and Compensation of Language Specialists

1. Action Requested: This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval in paragraph 4.

2. Background:

a. The Language Incentive Program (LIP), when established in October 1979, included a requirement for an annual effectiveness review. The first annual review was accomplished by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in July 1980. Along with other recommendations and findings discussed at an Executive Committee meeting on 24 November 1980 was the NAPA recommendation that language specialists not benefit from the LIP by receiving awards for fluency in the language or mutually intelligible languages for which they were hired. Following the Executive Committee meeting the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence charged me with establishing a Task Force to review and report on the identification, classification, compensation, and career opportunities of language specialists by 1 April 1981.

b. The Task Force, which included membership from the four Directorates, has completed its charge. The report is attached for your review.

3. Staff Position:

a. I agree with the Task Force position on employment categories constituting "language specialists" and the comments on career opportunities. I do not agree with the position that language specialists continue participating in the LIP for the language or mutually intelligible language for which they were hired and, therefore, support the NAPA recommendation. The National Foreign Assessment Center's representative to the Task Force also does not support continued participation of language specialists in the LIP.

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b. I recognize the need for language specialists and their value in accomplishing the Agency's mission but believe it is inappropriate to reward financially language specialists further for using the skills for which they were hired. There are other specialists within the Agency (such as computer programmers, engineers, economists, chemists, etc.) who were hired specifically for their acquired skills and they do not receive financial reward in addition to their salary for using their skills. By continuing to reward language specialists additionally through the LIP for the skill for which they were hired and paid, a precedent can be set for every other specialist who might want additional monetary recognition.

c. Discontinuing the awards to language specialists will impact unfavorably on the morale of the [ ] language specialists presently receiving the award (LIP awards range from \$800 to \$1500 annually for Level IV proficiency and the difficulty of the language). To mitigate this impact while acknowledging the inappropriateness of an earlier decision to grant awards, I suggest a one-time pay adjustment for language specialists presently receiving LIP awards. I suggest this pay adjustment rather than a separate salary scale or position upgrades. A survey of other Federal agencies indicated that language specialists positions at CIA are normally one grade higher than elsewhere in the Government. This pay adjustment will be equal to a one-step increase (e.g., a GS-11, step 4 would have his or her pay adjusted to that of a GS-11, step 5, an increase of \$750 per year). This will dampen the morale problem by serving as a signal to language specialists of the value of their service to the Agency, grant them increased salary benefits over the long-term, and increase their base salary for retirement computations and insurance benefits. The one-time cost of the pay adjustment will be approximately \$240,000 in comparison to the \$372,000 it will cost annually to continue rewarding language specialists through the LIP. Unfortunately, there are presently 10 language specialists who are at the top step of their General Schedule (GS) grade range and who, therefore, may not be able to receive this pay adjustment.

d. The pay authorities of the DCI are not tied to the General Schedule (GS) since CIA is exempt. Thus, the Agency can make this type of pay adjustment.

4. Recommendation: Because of the differing opinions, it is recommended that this report be returned to the Executive Committee for consideration before you make a final decision whether to continue or discontinue the LIP for language specialists.

[Redacted Signature]

Harry E. Fitzwater

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Attachment

APPROVED:

[Redacted Signature]

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

DISAPPROVED:

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

DATE:

9/16/81

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26 March 1981

Staff Study on the Classification and  
Compensation of Language Specialists

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to define language specialists and to recommend that incentives for language specialists continue to be awarded through the Language Incentive Program (LIP), as it is presently constituted.

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II. Background:

A. In November 1979, The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies issued the text of its final report to the President entitled Strength Through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability. Pointing to the fact that it had found "a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity and public sensitivity," the Commission called on the President to "set an agenda for action in these areas of national need" and made a number of recommendations to repair this deficiency in both the private and public sector. Among these recommendations: the U.S. Government should achieve 100 percent compliance in filling positions designated as requiring foreign language competency; review the criteria for such designation in order to strengthen the Government's foreign language capability; and evaluate the career systems of foreign affairs agencies to ensure adequate incentives for professional staff members to acquire and maintain foreign language and area expertise.

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B. The previous month (October 1979), working in parallel with and responsive to the activities of the Presidential Commission, CIA had established the LIP "to encourage the development and maintenance of foreign language skills to support Agency activities" and "to reward actual job-related utilization of foreign languages." [redacted] 25X1

That this DCI-directed action occurred in tandem with and in response to the work of the Presidential Commission is evident in the terms of a 26 March 1979 letter from the DCI to Dr. Brzezinski in which he stated: "As you know, the quality of US intelligence depends in no small measure on our ability to hire well-educated foreign area specialists and linguists, and we are especially interested in increasing the quality of advanced research on foreign areas." [redacted] 25X1

C. To meet the LIP requirement for an annual review to assess its effectiveness, the Agency contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in July 1980 to conduct the first annual review. As a result of the NAPA report on the LIP, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, at the Executive Committee meeting of 24 November 1980, charged the D/PPPM with defining those personnel hired principally for their language skills (that is, "language specialists"), and with establishing a Task Force by 1 January 1981 to review and report on the classification and compensation of language specialists by 1 April 1981. [redacted] 25X1

D. Specifically, the Executive Committee approved the NAPA recommendation that "persons hired or appointed to their present positions, based primarily on their language skills, should be excluded from the Language Use Award (LUA), Language Achievement Award (LAA), and Language

Maintenance Award (IMA) in the language or mutually intelligible languages upon which the appointment was based;" the Executive Committee directed that the Task Force "report on job classification, career opportunities, or special salary rates to be established in lieu of LUAs," with the LUAs for language specialists being "discontinued upon the implementation of the decisions made on the basis of the Task Force recommendation." The NAPA Team had specified that "the effective date of discontinuing the LUA should be a date where a pay adjustment or personnel action takes place for the specific individuals involved" and that "cutting off the LUA for language specialists without taking other action to recognize their value to the organization would signal an abrupt reversal of recognition indicated earlier," the result of which "could be extremely deleterious." The Executive Committee also approved the NAPA recommendation that the LUAs be continued as an element of the LIP, but that participation be limited "to full-time positions overseas in which a language is essential," amending this recommendation to allow personnel in CONUS-based [ ] and DDS&T-designated slots to continue receiving [ ]

E. The Task Force on Language Specialists, having reviewed the charge of the Executive Committee and having met on 16 December 1980 and 9 and 25 February 1981, reached agreement on the employment categories to constitute language specialists, discussed the career opportunities available to language specialists, and discussed proposals for alternative ways to constitute language specialists if they are excluded from the three types of language awards. [ ]

III. Present Policy and Procedures:

The CIA Language Incentive Program is currently available to full-time staff employees, staff agents, career associates, contract emp

and part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week and are U.S. citizens. The LIP presently consists of three awards -- the Language Use, Language Achievement, and Language Maintenance Awards. LUAs take the form of an addition to compensation as follows:

- \$50 per biweekly pay period to those employees filling Unit Language Requirement (ULR) positions designated by their Directorates and who have been tested to have Minimum Professional Proficiency (Level 3) or higher, if required by the position, in the required language and skill.
- \$25 per biweekly pay period to those employees filling ULR positions overseas designated by their Directorates and who have been tested at a level no lower than one full level below the required proficiency and, in any case, no lower than Level 2.

25X1 At present,  language specialists are receiving LUAs. LAAs and IMAs are lump-sum payments of varying amounts to those employees designated as participants in the program by their Directorates and who have been tested or certified to have a proficiency level in the specified incentive language. The number of LAAs and IMAs paid to language specialists is minimal in comparison with those paid to non-language specialists.

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IV. Discussion of Options:

A. Throughout its deliberations, the Task Force found it difficult to reconcile the NAPA recommendations that the Agency both disqualify language specialists from participation in the LIP and at the same time identify some other form of incentive to replace the LIP. As already noted, the NAPA reasoning was based on the premise that it was inappropriate to reward language specialists further for the skill for which they were hired. This position cannot coexist logically with the recommendation to replace the LIP with some other form of premium. If it is wrong to provide

additional compensation to language specialists in any continuing manner beyond their normal rate of pay, then it is equally wrong to provide additional compensation in the form of bonuses or anything similar. If there is no compelling ground for additional recognition, then there is not, and never was, compelling ground for a language incentive program for language specialists.

25X1 B. The following discussion of options for replacing the LIP for language specialists illustrates the difficulty of mating these two recommendations. Further, all of the options also entail inequities, difficulties of administration, or costs in excess of those in the existing system. Still further, the creation of an alternate system solely for language specialists would create administrative difficulties when eligible officers move from one program to another.

V. Options:

The Task Force, in arriving at its decision, considered the following options.

25X1 A. Continue rewarding language specialists through the LIP, as currently  
 25X1 constituted.

1. Arguments for this solution are primarily: a) the mandate of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies; b) the morale of the employees who see the awards as the first sign of long-deserved recognition of the value of their contribution; c) the fact that payment of the award is at the discretion of the component after qualification by test; d) the flexibility of the LIP so that changes can easily be made; and, e) the value of the awards as both a recruitment incentive and an incentive to language specialists to remain in components doing language-related work.

2. Arguments against this solution are primarily: a) the inappropriateness of further rewarding language specialists for the skill for which they were hired; and, b) the fact that this could set a precedent for every other specialist who might want monetary recognition.

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B. Continue rewarding specialists through the LIP, but only for those languages for which the Agency is unable to find sufficient numbers of specialists.

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1. Arguments for this solution are the same as in A.1. -- the need to upgrade national language assets, the morale and contribution of those who would continue to get awards, the discretionary payment and flexibility, and the use of the awards as recruitment and retention incentives. An additional argument in this case, however, is that a selective awards program would be directed toward the critical language needs of the Agency, rewarding those people who fill those needs, and encouraging further study in those specific languages.

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2. Except for the precedent-setting consideration in A.2.b., the argument against this solution is the same as in A.2. -- the inappropriateness of further rewards. The exception is made because it would be clear from the fact that this awards program is selective that the skill was being rewarded only because it was of critical need. Another argument against this solution is also apparent -- the morale and perception of inequity on the part of those language specialists in non-critical languages whose awards would be discontinued.

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C. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but institute a separate salary scale for them.

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1. The arguments for this solution are: a) that all language specialists would continue to receive recognition for their skills, but

that this recognition would not be in the form of an incentive award for the very skills for which they were hired; and, b) that despite the fact that the CIA salary structure for language specialists already exceeds that of most of the rest of Government, this structure does not always reflect the fact that CIA language specialists are making a greater contribution to national security and other aspects of our national life than are linguists in some other areas of Government, that the types of work performed are often unrelated to language work in the rest of Government, and that the work is frequently far more difficult, involving substantive expertise as well as the language.

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2. The arguments against this solution are: a) that it cannot be shown that there is a lack of language-qualified candidates either for CIA or, it appears, for other Government agencies, as the Office of Personnel Management has not established a special language pay scale; and, b) that although the option to employ this solution does exist under the special authorities of the Director of Central Intelligence, past DCIs have been reluctant to use their special authorities for this purpose and the General Counsel has been equally reluctant to have them do so.

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D. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but upgrade language-specialist positions.

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1. The arguments for this solution are the same as those for C.1. -- recognition would continue, but the granting of an award to someone for the skill for which they were hired would cease and the unique contribution of CIA language specialists would be recognized.

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2. The arguments against this solution are: a) that the CIA salary structure for language specialists already exceeds that of most

of the rest of the Government, and PMCD sees no possibility of further grade enhancement for this category of employees; b) that if this measure were taken for language specialists there would be a rippling affect to other employees; and, c) that such a solution would only solve the problem for 18 to 28 months, after which the salary structure would again begin to even out.

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E. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but bring them on-board at a higher step within the grade at which they are hired.

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1. The argument for this solution is similar to that for C.1.a. -- recognition, but no award for the same skill as that hired for.

In this case, the recognition would be implicit in the hiring process.

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2. The argument against this solution is that only those employees not yet hired would be eligible for the increment, thus possibly causing a grave morale problem for those now on-board who are receiving the awards.

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F. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but institute a retention bonus or some other kind of incentive system for them.

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1. The argument for this solution is again the same as that for C.1.a. -- recognition, but no award for the same skill as that hired for.

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2. The argument against this solution is again that of the inappropriateness of rewarding a specialist for the skill for which he or she was hired -- as this would essentially be the same solution as the current LIP, with a different name, it would make more sense to retain the current program.

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G. Discontinue the LIP for language specialists, but give those currently on-board an in-step, and bring on-board those newly hired

at a higher step within the grade at which they were hired.

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1. The argument for this solution is again similar to that for C.1.a. -- recognition, but no "duplicate" monetary award. In this case, not only would the recognition be implicit in the hiring process, but it would also include those on-board.

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2. The arguments against this solution are similar to two of those in C.2. -- the rippling affect to other employees and the leveling out of the pay scale in relatively short order. In addition, this solution would seem to run counter to the desire on the part of Agency management to relate performance to awards similar to the Quality Step Increase; it would provide language specialists with an increment that would affect their salaries throughout their careers, even if they should move out of language-specialist positions; and, as in C., it is contrary to established Agency policy and thus would require the DCI's special authorities to implement. Furthermore, it would have built-in inequities in that the amount of the step increase for a GS-7, for example, is less than that for a GS-12 -- and those at the tenth step of a grade (at present, this would involve 10 people) would be ineligible to receive further funds.

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VI. Task Force Position:

A. The Task Force agreed that those employment categories constituting "language specialists" include Intelligence Officer-Foreign Documents, Scientific Linguist, Translator, Broadcast Monitor-Multilingual, Transcriber, Translator-Supervisor, Transcriber-Supervisor, and Instructor-Foreign Language.

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B. The Task Force found that structured career opportunities currently exist for Intelligence Officers-Foreign Documents. No such opportunities exist for other language specialists, although the DO representatives stated that they would be willing to design a career development profile for their personnel. Furthermore, an examination of the career tracks of language specialists has revealed that there is a great deal of movement within offices and transfers from one office to another, in many cases leading to new careers and higher grades.

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C. The Task Force, having reviewed and discussed all of the options just presented, concluded that each would be in one sense a continuation of the LIP, in that each would indeed provide special recognition for the language skill for which the person was hired. The Task Force further concluded that each option would entail inequities, difficulties of administration, or costs which could exceed any now existing with the LIP. The Task Force found that participating components regard the LIP as an effective program that is working and as a welcome signal of the value placed by Agency management upon the skills and contributions of language specialists to the Agency and to their country. Indeed, a perception of inequity would occur among those who might be disqualified from continued participation in the program.

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D. In light of the fact that discontinuance of these awards could be demoralizing to valuable employees; in cognizance of the recommendations of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, the NAPA Team, the Executive Committee, and the former DCI and DDCI; in view of the generally positive effect the program has had

since its inception; and having identified no more effective means of conveying Agency management concerns in this area, the Task Force, with one dissenting vote, has concluded that the soundest and most appropriate measure of recognition for language specialists is Option A -- that is, the Language Incentive Program now in force. The dissent has been expressed by NFAC which, acknowledging that any demoralizing affect would be unfortunante, takes the position recommended by the NAPA Team and approved by the Executive Committee that language specialists " . . . should be excluded from [LIP awards] in the language or mutually intelligible languages upon which [their] appointment was based." (The NFAC position is detailed in the memorandum attached.) However, the Task Force supports the idea that the Language Development Committee should continue to review, annually, the appropriateness of awarding language awards to language specialists.

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Attachment

Task Force Members:

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